

TESTIMONY

OF

REV. DR. C. WELTON GADDY

ON BEHALF OF

THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY,

AND HUMAN RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REGARDING

“AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT’S VISION: MAKING PERMANENT THE

FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE”

JUNE 21, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cummings, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of The Interfaith Alliance. With a membership of over 150,000 people from 75 different faith traditions, we are a nonpartisan, national grassroots organization dedicated to promoting the positive and healing role of religion in public life. In addition to serving as President of The Interfaith Alliance, I also serve as Pastor for Preaching and Worship at North Minster Baptist Church in Monroe, Louisiana.

The Interfaith Alliance, along with a large coalition of civil rights, religious, labor, education and other organizations, respects the important role that religious groups have played in providing assistance to those in need. However, we believe that the president's faith-based initiative – as well as recent attempts by the federal government to increase funding of religion through the faith-based initiative -- is ultimately a bad way to do a good thing.

I am grateful for a government that is interested in the welfare of those in our society who are most in need. A partnership between religion and government in assisting the most helpless in our society is consistent with the heritage in this nation. However, current proposals for an expansion of charitable choice legislation and the establishment of faith-based initiatives point not to a viable partnership between religion and government, but rather to a contractual arrangement in which houses of worship become functionaries of the government in the delivery of certain services, this is an arrangement that is bad for religion, bad for government, and threatening to those to whom it would offer assistance. Indeed, it is an ill-conceived solution in search of a problem that does not exist.

Allow me the opportunity to jump ahead and anticipate your first question: "Why would a religious leader not want federal money to do social services? Given an increase in poverty, people without medical insurance and a proliferation of people in need, how can you justify not supporting this program given the desperate needs that keep multiplying in our nation?"

My opposition to this program comes not out of a lack of concern for the poor, the hungry, the abused, and those with other overwhelming needs. My opposition to this program comes out of a concern that the program, as presently configured, ultimately will hurt, not help, both the religious community and the civil community in their efforts to meet those needs.

THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE IS THE WRONG WAY TO DO RIGHT AND CREATES MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT SOLVES UNDER THE GUISE OF HELPING PEOPLE.

Let me offer you ten reasons why I do not want federal money to do faith-based social services as The White House based program is currently constructed. My observations stem not out of cynicism or an anti-religion bias but out of over 40 years of ministry involving interaction with a number of different religious organizations.

1. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE JEOPARDIZES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.** To date, the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution has been interpreted to mandate that no federal or state tax dollars should fund “pervasively sectarian” organizations. Religious ministries that want to provide social services with government funds must: (1) incorporate separately from their sponsoring religious institutions; (2) refrain from religious activities and proselytizing during the government-funded program; and (3) provide an environment that is free from religious symbols and doctrine where they seek to operate their social service. The Clinton Administration explicitly cited the Establishment Clause as the guiding principle for the implementation of charitable choice programs.

The current president’s faith-based initiative is government involvement in religion in a manner unhealthy for religion as well as unconstitutional for the government. The Establishment Clause of the Constitution is no longer considered the guiding principle for the development of charitable choice programs. Indeed, the emphasis of the present initiative falls on encouraging the religious character of social service providers and using faith as a therapeutic tool. President Bush has spoken of how faith itself is the missing ingredient in many secular social service programs. According to Congressional experts, charitable choice, as a concept, challenges these restrictions and seeks to allow religious organizations to retain their religious character and to employ their faith in carrying out programs that are directly subsidized by the government.

From the day on which then President-elect Bush first announced this initiative in the First Baptist Church of Austin, Texas to the present moment, advocates of the program have chided those of us who express concerns about the program’s negative impact on church-state separation. In several discussions on charitable choice, I have listened with dismay as members of Congress urged ministers in local parishes and other members of their audiences to think about the pragmatics, not the principles involved here.

If we lose religious liberty by getting sloppy in our protection of its corollary, the institutional separation of religion and government, we will hurt both religion and government, jeopardizing seriously the democratic provision that has allowed the religious vitality in our nation that is so self-evident in current religions’ charities.

At this point, I think it is appropriate to cite Justice Hugo Black’s brilliant summary of the Establishment Clause (*Everson v. Board of Education*, 1947):

The "Establishment of Religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa.

In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and State."

2. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE FALSELY ASSUMES THAT FAITH-BASED SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE SUPERIOR AT DELIVERING SERVICES.** The President and supporters of his program like to say that faith-based organizations inherently do a better job at social reform than do their secular counterparts, functioning with more efficiency and effectiveness. That gross generalization bears all the flaws of any gross generalization. The fact is that some faith-based social service agencies do a better job than their secular counterparts and some do not. Frankly, we cannot even assume that a religious program or charity will be run with more integrity, efficiency, and accountability than other charitable programs. In my first year of seminary, when my seminary notes were stolen, I learned that people in religious institutions represent a cross section of the society that they serve.

A study was conducted recently (results released October, 2003) by Partha Deb (Lead Researcher, Department of Economics, Hunter College City University of New York) and Dana Jones (Indiana Manpower Placement and Comprehensive Training program Liaison, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, Indiana University-Purdue University). They “examined the differences in job market outcomes of individuals who receive job training from faith-based versus secular providers...” They found that “faith-based and secular providers have the same rates of placement into jobs and that, conditional on employment, the jobs have similar wages.” They also found that “clients who have received training from faith-based providers are, conditional on employment, substantially less likely to work full time and substantially less likely to have health insurance through their employers.” They concluded by saying, “these findings suggest that secular providers of services may have access to job opportunities of better quality as compared to faith-based providers.”¹

The researchers of this same study also note in their abstract that even though there is a belief that “religious providers are more effective than their secular counterparts, this belief has never been tested; indeed, there is comparatively little research on the efficacy of social welfare programs in general.” They add, “there is relatively little research in the area of provisional social services by faith-based organizations. We have not been able to find, however, any published literature that examines differences in outcomes of clients who receive social services from faith-based versus secular providers.”

3. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE CLEARS THE PATH TO VIOLATE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS BY ALLOWING EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION WITH TAX-PAYER MONEY.** One year ago, (May 8, 2003), the House passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization (H.R. 1261) by a vote of 220-204. Throughout its 21 year history, WIA contained a civil rights provision barring discrimination based on religion, among other protected classes, in federal job training programs. In fact, these protections were included in the original federal job training legislation that then Senator Dan Quayle (R-IN) sponsored. Senator Quayle’s legislation passed through a committee chaired by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and was signed by President Ronald W. Reagan. This civil rights provision never served as an obstacle to the participation of religiously affiliated organizations in federal job training programs. Indeed, many religiously affiliated organizations participate in WIA programs and comply with the same civil rights provision that applies to all other participants.

¹ Full study was conducted through The Center for Urban Policy and The Environment. “Faith-Based Social Service Provision Under Charitable Choice: A Study of Implementation in Three State Final Results.”

However, in March 2005, The US House of Representatives passed the Job Training Improvement Act of 2005 (HR 27) which exempted religious organizations that receive Federal funds from the prohibition of discrimination that is standard practice for all other organizations that contract with the federal government. Specifically, under the subsections entitled “Prohibition of Discrimination Regarding Participation, Benefits and Employment,” and “Exemption for Religious Organizations,” the bill stated, that standard nondiscrimination policies “shall not apply to a recipient of financial assistance under this title that is a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society, with respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion...”

A religious organization that uses its liberty to do charity should not have to fear that its acts of charity will erode liberty both for itself and for the recipients of its services. Through this program federal funds can be used without compliance with civil rights legislation. The faith-based initiative violates basic principles of our democracy and the integrity of religion in the name of pragmatics. The two can be separated only at great expense to the vitality of democracy and the integrity of religion. We should not require a person to give up civil rights in order to go through a soup kitchen or attend job training programs.

You will hear arguments from those wanting religious organizations to use federal funds to discriminate against their employees that their position is consistent with a provision in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that generally permits religious organizations to grant preference to members of their own religion, and to exclude those who do not agree with their religion, when making employment decisions. As a Baptist preacher, I value those protective provisions traditionally granted primarily to houses of worship and pervasively religious organizations. However, they are constitutionally appropriate because these houses of worship and religious organizations receive no government funding. I am a patriot as well as a pastor, and as a patriot, I want federal money to go to organizations that are faithful in their compliance with civil rights laws. That expectation, too, is good religion.

4. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE USES TAX-PAYER MONEY TO PROPAGATE FAITH.** The president repeatedly has said that the strength of faith-based social services *is* faith. Sometimes he has even cited the program’s orientation to and dependence on “the wonder working power of God.” How can the government support faith-dependent services without supporting faith? It’s hypocritical to suggest that it doesn’t happen. In his state of the union addresses, President Bush has praised faith-based social services because of “the wonder working power” of them. We even saw the President in Baton Rouge, LA last year holding up a Bible and declaring it as the guideline for his faith-based initiative, promising that this program was about the work of transformation and conversion. Those truths resonate with what I should be doing in my ministry but not with what the government of this nation should be doing with public money.
5. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE ASSUMES THAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS UNDERSTAND, OR EVEN AGREE WITH, THE CONSTITUTIONAL SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT.** In the study, “What Separation of Church and State? Constitutional Competence and the Bush Faith-based Initiative,” conducted by Sheila Sues Kennedy² of Indiana University Purdue and Leda Hall of Indiana University South Bend, the researchers felt that since a large

² “Journal of Law and Policy” 2003. Study reprinted in The Center for Urban Policy and The Environment. “Faith-Based Social Service Provision Under Charitable Choice: A Study of Implementation in Three State Final Results.”

amount of federal dollars were going directly to congregations, it was only fair to assess whether the leaders of congregations are “as familiar with those constitutional constraints, and as willing, or able, to operate within them.”

The researchers devised a simple Agree, Disagree, Don’t Know eleven question survey whose sole intent was to measure what congregational leaders know about the First Amendment’s religion clauses; this was arguably of relevance to their operations. The survey was conducted in the city of South Bend, Indiana because it was “large enough and diverse enough to be representative, but small enough to be manageable.” The survey was also conducted through a collaborative arrangement with the United Religious Community of St. Joseph, Indiana (URC). The URC had an interfaith list of 344 congregations and each one was mailed a survey. One hundred three usable surveys were returned (30% response rate).

Of the 103 responses, an astonishing 75 disagreed with the statement “The First Amendment and other provisions of the Bill of Rights apply only to government action.” The researchers noted that this type of response was “disheartening” and that the “concept of state action – the principle that the Bill of Rights constrains only action by agencies of government – is basic to any understanding of the operation of American constitutional principles.”

Even more troubling was 70 respondents disagreed with the statement “If a congregation has a contract with government to provide services, the congregation may not include religious instruction or prayer as part of the service funded under the contract.” Members of Congress interested in preserving the Constitution cannot assume that faith-based funding will not be used to support the imposition of religious rituals or even the practice of proselytizing among clients of those receiving these federal funds. I understand the passion for religion among providers. I share it. But the passion of this government should be to uphold its Constitution.

6. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE AND GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY FUNDING A HOUSE OF WORSHIP ENDANGER THE INTEGRITY OF RELIGION AND THE COMMUNITY OF WORSHIP.** When you bring public tax dollars into sanctuaries and educational rooms of a house of worship, religion is desacralized and religious leaders are compromised. Religion has made its greatest contribution to this nation as an independent voice of conscience calling the nation to the highest and best purpose in its founding vision. When religious leaders and houses of worship become dependent on government, they will think more than twice about speaking prophetically and risk losing their funding. This nation had better think more than twice before risking the loss of the voices of patriotic and religious prophets.
 - a. **Government Is Irresponsibly Distributing Money With Lack Of Expectations Of Accountability, But Accountability Will Bring About An Entanglement Between Religion And Government.** Government funds never flow anywhere that regulations don’t occur. That means the government will be regulating our houses of worship and working through the budgets of congregations to assess accountability in spending. What a horrendous situation and the ultimate conundrum.

In addition, the faith-based initiative raises unrealistic funding expectations. As you are well aware, our government is looking at making cuts to programs in order to

deal with the federal deficit. As I travel the nation, I find scores of people with heightened expectations regarding religion's ability to be funded to offer them help. Yet the reality is simply that the pie is shrinking and funds are shifting from one provider to another.

- b. **Government Lacks An Operational Understanding Of Houses Of Worships.** One program instituted by Executive Order allows faith-based funding to be used for the construction of buildings related to houses of worship that can be used for the delivery of social services. Anybody who knows the practices of local houses of worship knows that congregations do not have the luxury of single-use buildings. My congregations have done a variety of social service programs in Sunday School Classrooms and other buildings in the church complex used for Christian education and worship. Social services will be provided in a setting that by its very design and decoration commends a particular faith to all who come within it.
- c. **Government Does Not Require Houses Of Worship To Establish Separate 501-C-3 Accounts When They Receive Federal Money.** There are many fine examples of faith-based providers, such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services and Jewish Family Services that take federal money. However, they set up separate 501-c-3 accounts that offer a set of rules to follow when using this money. When federal money flows directly into individual houses of worship, that constitutes the anti-constitutional practice of "establishing religion." What is so wrong with demanding that distributors of federal funds first become 501-c-3 organizations? Frankly, hesitancy to embrace this historic practice makes me question what this funding is really about.
 - i. **Government Is Turning Religious Institutions Into Contract Employees Of The Federal Government.** Houses of worship do not need contracts. We need a covenant of agreement that guarantees the church will do its part and the government separately will provide for the public welfare.
- d. **Government Places Itself In The Position Of Having To Define Religion And Judge The Religious Substance Of Organizations.** During the 2000 presidential campaign, Mr. Bush "made clear his aversion to the Nation of Islam during the 2000 election campaign: I don't see how we can allow public dollars to fund programs where spite and hate is the core of the message. Louis Farrakhan preaches hate," he declared.³ The president never explained how the government would decide which groups preach "hate," and which preach "love." Ultimately, the government has no business telling us what is and what is not religion.
- e. **Government Is Making Religious Institutions Dependent On Government Funding And Thus Muting Their Prophetic Voice.** I am being intentionally redundant because of the importance of the truth involved. People who turn to the government for funding prioritize funding their social services programs more than protecting their independence. Ultimately, this compromises the prophetic voice of

³ (The American Prospect, "Faith-Based Favoritism," 04-09-01)

religion in this nation.

7. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE MAKES CLIENTS VULNERABLE TO RELIGIOUS PROSELYTIZING AS A PREREQUISITE TO RECEIVING HELP.** It has long been official policy of the United States that the government does not pay for proselytization and the spread of sectarian views. The faith-based initiative threatens and undermines this wise and longstanding policy. The Washington Post reported on January 31, 2001, "The social service programs funded by President Bush's 'faith-based initiative' could include religious content -- such as Bible reading -- as long as taxpayers' money was used only for lights, chairs or other nonreligious expenses, administration officials said yesterday as they released details of the plan they will send to Congress." Yet the same article also observed, "But the administration's acknowledgement that clients of faith-based programs may be encouraged to convert to a particular faith, even though no federal dollars would go to buy Bibles or crosses, could add to the concern of critics that the plan could breach the constitutionally ordained separation of church and state."

In an article by Marvin Olasky, the father of Compassionate Conservatism, in the evangelical magazine World discussed this issue in explicit terms. World observed, "But wait, say TeamBush sources: Carl Esbeck, senior counsel in the Department of Justice, drafted that 'giveaway' and many other provisions of H.R. 7, and Mr. Esbeck does not give away anything lightly. The Traditional Values Coalition's Mr. [Lou] Sheldon argues that H.R. 7's provisions will work: 'All it takes is a little bit of creativity.' One executive close to the White House said, 'Esbeck is a master at writing vague language that he knows how to get around.'" ("Rolling the Dice," World Magazine, August 4, 2001)

In fact, Mr. Olasky once chided me about my opposition to the faith-based initiative, citing that Jesus asked people to listen to him preach before he would give them bread. I had to remind Mr. Olasky that Jesus, not Herod was paying for the food.

A review of the Administration's final regulations across a spectrum of federal programs reveals that the rules that are supposed to prohibit the inclusion of religious activity in publicly funded programs are in fact a wink and a nod to encourage such activity. To say that they do not meet the current constitutional standard that is required for religious organizations operating publicly funded programs is an understatement. An independent, nonpartisan legal analysis on the final regulations by the Roundtable on Religion and Social Policy put it succinctly when it stated, "On the most important legal question -- the extent to which government may directly finance religious activity -- the rules perpetuate a fundamental misunderstanding of the law of the Establishment Clause."

It is critical that Congress make clear to the Administration that appropriate constitutional standards must be established and respected as it acts on its own to finance its faith-based initiative. To do otherwise does a disservice to our Constitution and violates the religious liberty rights of beneficiaries. It also raises serious questions about how government officials can pick and choose among programs sponsored by faith-based organizations when religious activity is intertwined in those programs.

8. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE CREATES INTER-RELIGIOUS COMPETITION.** The government has no business making decisions about which religion does the best job of providing social services, healing ministries, and the like. In the town in which I pastor, how much chance does a Baha'i group, a minority presence in the community, have in competition with Roman Catholics and Evangelical Christians? Politics already have divided religion in this nation to a point of near debilitation. Surely we do not want to worsen that situation under the guise of doing charity.
9. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE JEOPARDIZES CLIENTS BY:**
- a. **Confusing good intentions with professional standards.** I have listened to social service providers speak of their funding drying up as money is redirected to faith-based agencies. We are hurting the delivery of social services when we remove funding from people who, often motivated by their religion, trained for years to do their work only to discover that their jobs are being abolished so that people with no training but only good intentions can receive that money.
 - b. **Refusing to establish standards for a delivery of services.** Not even providing support for the teaching of faith is a justifiable rationale for eliminating basic regulations established to protect the most vulnerable in our society. The very thought compromises the responsibility of our government to take care of those who are not able to take care of themselves and offends a genuinely sensitive religious conscience.
 - c. **Failing to provide beneficiaries with adequate notice about their rights and backgrounds of providers.** Though one of the intentions of the faith-based initiative was to allow a greater diversity of providers so beneficiaries could "choose" amongst providers, the reality is that the initiative fails beneficiaries in a number of ways. When someone is seeking services and chooses a faith-based provider, they need to be informed up front what their rights are, including: they have a right to not be discriminated against; the right to not participate in religious activities; the right to receive services without regard to their participation in religious activities; the right to receive services, regardless of their religious affiliation; and the right to seek an alternative provider. The faith-based initiative fails to adequately inform beneficiaries of their rights and how to enforce them. More troubling, is that the initiative fails to give beneficiaries key information that may be vital to their "choice" among providers. For instance, the Access to Recovery program is a federally funded voucher program, and a Bush Administration initiative, for beneficiaries to access substance abuse treatment services. However, the initiative fails to ensure that their clients are aware that some faith-providers may be exempt from state licensing requirements.⁴ It is vital to ensure that beneficiaries not only have information about the qualifications of these providers but also have in full hand what rights they have. This type of consumer protection is standard in many facets of our lives, yet as it stands now, the faith-based initiative offer no consumer protections.

⁴ Texas exempts faith-based providers from state licensing requirements.

10. **THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE IS ABOUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN CHARITY AND RELIGION.**
In 2000, Mr. Bush used the faith-based initiative as a major campaign issue in this run for the White House and in 2004, he kicked off his re-election campaign at a faith-based initiative rally on the West Coast.

In January of 2005, an article ran in the Los Angeles Times documenting, for the first time, that the faith-based initiative was in part, designed as a political tool. The article noted, "Bishop Sedgwick Daniels, one of this city's most prominent black pastors, supported Democrats in past presidential elections, backing Bill Clinton and Al Gore. This fall, however, the bishop's broad face appeared on Republican Party fliers in the battleground state of Wisconsin, endorsing President Bush as the candidate who "shares our views." What changed? After Bush's contested 2000 victory, Daniels felt the pull of a most powerful worldly force: a call from the White House. He conferred with top administration officials and had a visit in 2002 from the president himself. His church later received \$1.5 million in federal funds through Bush's initiative to support faith-based social services. Daniels' political conversion, and similar transformations by black pastors across the nation, form a chapter in the playbook of Bush's 2004 reelection campaign -- and may mark the beginning of a political realignment long sought by senior White House advisor Karl Rove and other GOP strategists."⁵

Several days later in a Washington Times opinion-editorial (January 25, 2005), Ken Mehlman, the new chairman of the Republican Party said, "In 2004, Mr. Bush received 530,000 more black votes than in 2000. In 2005, we will engage blacks as the nation debates whether faith-based organizations should have a seat at the table and whether public schools need to be more accountable and parents need more choices, and we will broaden the Republican Party with more black support."

And as reported in the Los Angeles Times, we see just how influential this strategy was. "In the last seven presidential elections, the GOP's share of the black vote ranged from 8% to 11% nationwide. But by courting conservative blacks in battleground states - reaching out through programs such as the president's faith-based initiative - GOP organizers believe they made the difference that secured Bush's victory in 2004. In Ohio, for instance, a concerted effort increased black support for Bush from 9% in 2000 to 16% in 2004, providing a cushion that allowed the president to win the pivotal state outright on election night. The Black Contract With America will be unveiled by Bishop Harry R. Jackson Jr., a registered Democrat from suburban Washington who backed Bush in 2004 after voting against him four years earlier. He was drawn, he said, to the GOP's social conservatism that he thought reflected the true values of black churches."⁶

Whether or not we agree that the faith-based initiative was an important component in the president's electoral strategy, the very perception that this is a possibility is a broadside to religious integrity.

⁵ (LA Times, "Bush Rewarded by Black Pastors' Faith; His stands, backed by funding of ministries, redefined the GOP's image with some, 01-18-05)

⁶ (LA Times, "GOP Sees a Future in Black Churches," 02-01-05)

Because of the reasons stated above, I believe that the faith-based initiative is a program whose founders continually re-evaluate its value, both programmatically and politically. In fact, the mayor of Indianapolis, Steve Goldsmith, who has been noted as one of the founders, told me in a public forum that the faith-based initiative was taking on dimensions that made it very problematic.

CONCLUSION

We do not need a faith-based office in the White House. We have faith-based offices all over this nation and they are where they belong—in synagogues and gurdwaras, in mosques and churches, in temples and store-front ministry centers.

Religions in this nation want a partnership with government. The federal government can be of immense help in relieving the suffering which we address every day. We need tax incentives for charitable giving and tax relief for the poor in our land who are carrying a part of the burden created by tax relief for the wealthy. We need a commitment to public education and funding for public education that assures every student quality preparation for exiting poverty through the doorway of meaningful employment. We need an interest in welfare that does not adjust the welfare rolls to cut funding but that adjusts funding to really cut the welfare rolls. Real compassion should be evident in every line item in the federal budget, not just at those places intended to promote the government's funding of religion.

Finally, the very purpose of this proposed legislation represents a problem at the heart of the faith-based initiative itself. This legislation would impose on future administrations a faith-based initiative office in the White House. That is not where religion works. Religion thrives on freedom, not on imposition. Even the most avid evangelists know that religion can never be pushed down a person's throat. The result is not authentic religion. We have no more business legislating the imposition of a faith-based office on future administrations than imposing religion on vulnerable persons through faith-based initiatives.